



SUSU

**Southampton University
Students' Union**



External Trustee Role Overview

Autumn 2025

Welcome from our Chair and Chief Executive

Dear potential applicant,

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our Trustee Board is unusual in that 8 of the 12 trustees are current or recent students, which is why the skills and experience of the 4 external trustees are so important. We are a membership-led organisation, with the voice of students at the heart of all we do, balanced on our Board by the professional experience and expertise of our external trustees.

The eight student/elected officer trustee roles serve a one-year term and the external trustees are appointed for four years. All our trustees, however, share our values and our passion for improving the student experience.

We are committed to maintaining the diversity of our Board and are currently particularly keen to hear from local, female applicants with a background in finance.

Please have a look at the information in this pack and if you would like an informal discussion before applying, do feel free to email Sonia Cottrell at Sonia.Cottrell@soton.ac.uk to arrange a time to chat.

With our best wishes,

Jim Anderson

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Sonia Cottrell

Chief Executive

Overview

SUSU

SUSU is a large students' union with approximately 70 core staff in addition to around 150 student support staff. Our charitable objectives are to represent and support students as well as providing social, cultural, sporting and recreational activities for students at the University of Southampton; we have an Advice Centre, over 350 clubs and societies and hundreds of academic reps. In addition, we have a bar, coffee shop, two retail outlets and offer weekly evening events.

We are based on the main University of Southampton campus in Highfield.

We are largely funded by a grant from the University of Southampton, to whom we are accountable. Our relationship with the University is strong, and our ambitions and strategy broadly aligned with theirs. However, our role is to represent students and we are a separate, independent charity. We work hard to ensure our relationship with the University is based on honesty, integrity and trust, making it possible to have challenging conversations when we need to.

Trustee Role and Responsibilities

Trustees have a duty to:

- Ensure that SUSU acts in accordance with its charitable objects, Articles of Association, and other guiding documents and, in particular, remains true to its Purpose and Values.
- Help SUSU achieve its objectives and enrich the life of every student.
- Ensure that SUSU complies with all relevant legislation and regulations, including relevant charity acts and education acts.
- Adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct and the [Charity Governance Code](#).
- Ensure that SUSU does not undertake activities that put its financial stability, members, or reputation at undue risk.

Working closely with the CEO and Senior Leadership Team, the trustees ensure development and delivery of a long-term strategy for SUSU. The Trustee Board is responsible for organisational governance, finances and adherence to SUSU's purpose and values.

Time Commitment

In addition to the full Trustee Board, there are 3 sub-committees of the Board: Audit & Risk, Finance & Resources, and Executive Performance & Reward. External trustees are expected to attend one of these sub-committees and act as Chair to another sub-committee.

All meetings last 1–2 hours, with an extended Trustee Board meeting once a year to include lunch. Meetings are held in person (hybrid attendance is also possible) and generally during normal working hours. Trustees are required to read all papers before the meetings. Optional pre-brief meetings are also set up before Board meetings.

The Trustee Board meets 3-4 times per year and the sub-committees meet 2-3 times per year. **Total time commitment from trustees is likely to be 4-5 hours per month.**

Skills and Experience

- Professional background in Finance, Commercial Management, Sustainability or EDI
- Shared commitment to the values of a Students' Union
- Good understanding of the importance of Higher Education
- Able to commit to meeting preparation and attendance
- No legal barriers to becoming a Trustee
- Ideally locally based

How to Apply

To apply please submit a CV and a cover letter that explains your motivation for applying. Completed applications should be emailed to Sonia.Cottrell@soton.ac.uk.

Interviews

We will invite all shortlisted candidates to interview in December, 2025.

Further Information

If you require any further information or would like to discuss the role before submitting an application, please email Sonia Cottrell at Sonia.Cottrell@soton.ac.uk